



CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM

2024-2025 Partnership Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Central Counties Tourism's mandate is to help businesses build their capacity to be successful at growing the visitor economy which, in turn, creates vibrant communities and compelling destinations. As such, the CCT Partnership Program is designed to support businesses and organizations dedicated to growing the visitor economy. While we are not discounting the value of projects that engage residents and build vibrant communities, it is our mandate, coupled with finite funds, which requires us to focus on growing visitation.

With that in mind, the parameters of the program are changing for fiscal 2024-2025. The staff and Partnership Committee have reviewed all partnerships as far back as 2021 and believe that almost all projects which focus on increasing the visitor economy will fit within the new program structure.

Please take time to review this entire document and then contact your Industry Relations Manager prior to starting the process.

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It is also important to not wait until the last minute to a) start your application and b) connect with your Industry Relations Manager. Doing so will greatly decrease your chance of success.

Three Partnership Streams

CCT is focusing on three priority streams for partnership. Applicants will be asked to choose from one of the following three project types.

1) Out-of-Region Marketing

- For stakeholders wanting to drive new visitors from further away
- All advertising, content development, social, media tours are eligible provided the messaging is directed at people 40+ kms from the destination
- CCT is only leveraging investments made to attract visitors from 40+ kms (eg. A festival has to spend \$1000 on 40+ kms marketing to be eligible for up to an additional \$1000 for 40+km marketing; they can't leverage a \$1000 fencing expense)

2) Multi-Stakeholder Development Initiatives

- For stakeholders who are developing new year-round multi-stop/location experiences, or promoting their existing multi-stop/location experience, with the goal of attracting day and overnight visitation (eg. [A Country Path](#), Passport Program, Brewery Trail, Studio Tour)
- Eligible expenses include website, graphic design, map printing, marketing/communications expenses, etc. Capital expenses are not eligible.
- Please note that CCT is also available to assist in the development of these experiences. Please contact your Industry Relations Manager.

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3) Destination Development

- Projects led by Municipalities, BIA's, Chambers and Boards of Trade that are focused on driving more visitation from out of region, and initiatives that extend length of stay (eg. Wayfinding Signage, patio projects, planning studies, conference/sport tourism bid support)

Application Evaluation Parameters

These are the areas of consideration that we will be looking for in an application:

- Showcases a positive return on investment (ROI). This means that the amount of money being brought to the community because of your project is greater than the cost of the project. The greater the ROI, the more impactful the project is.
- The length of time the project will drive visitation (<1 week is short vs >1 year is long)
- Brings in new visitors (from greater than 40kms) to the community and surrounding areas.
- Ensures that these new visitors spend time and money within the community (overnight visitation).
- Grows shoulder and off-season visitation.
- Collaborates with other businesses and organizations within the community/region to deliver the project.
- Promotes other activities and businesses in the community to visitors to extend length of stay or encourage repeat visitation.
- All applications must include a TREIMS (Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model) analysis based on projected visitation
- Provides a detailed budget that demonstrates that delivery will result in a positive ROI.
- Provides a marketing plan that outlines how visitors (40kms+) will be engaged and attracted to the community.
- A commitment to measuring and sharing project results.

Maximum Partnership Funding

The maximum that can be requested is 50% of your project budget up to a maximum of \$20,000. For example, if your total budget is \$25,000 the maximum you can request is \$12,500. Note that if approved you may not receive 100% of the requested budget but a portion.

Two Intakes

All applications are for projects taking place between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025.

Intake 1 Deadline is March 15, 2024 at 3:00pm.

Intake 2 Deadline is September 13, 2024 at 3:00pm.

One Application per Stream

Even if you plan on delivering more than one project during the fiscal year, please submit only one application per stream that outlines all of the projects.

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Partner Prerequisites

- At least one member of the team is required to complete the Tourism Ambassador program. We also highly encourage all applicants to complete at least one of the Social Media Marketing Program modules. Both of these are offered on the Central Counties Learning Lab.
- The organization/business MUST be registered with a profile on the Central Counties Website (you will be required to provide the link to your updated/current profile in your application).
- All applicants MUST speak with their Industry Relations Manager prior to applying. This should be completed no later than March 1, 2024 for applications submitted for the first intake and August 23, 2024 for applications submitted for the second intake.

Marketing Plan

Applicants must submit their out-of-region marketing and communications plan (if applicable) that outlines the following: Audience targeting (geographic and demographic), outreach tactics, ROI metrics and how you will report them.

Expectations of Successful Partners

Communication

Communication is key with a partnership. CCT wants to know how things are going as you hit project milestones. More importantly, CCT wants to share your story of success across the region to motivate others to think about investing in their business to help grow the tourism economy. By amplifying the success of our working together, we foster a better understanding, for political leaders, of the important role the visitor economy plays in our communities.

Reporting

Every partner must submit a thorough and 100% completed final report via the CCT Partnership Online Portal within **10 business days** of project completion. Please review the *Partnership Reporting Template* to understand the metrics that will be required.

Contract Adherence

Shortly after your project has been approved for partnership, you will receive a contract and a document called "Schedule D". It is vital to:

- a) Thoroughly read and understand your obligations for the partnership, and
- b) Sign both and return to Central Counties Tourism within 10 business days of receiving the documents.

Failure to complete all obligations of the contract and schedule will result in delayed/forfeited partnership funds from CCT and may result in ineligibility for future programs.

Financial Reconciliation

From a financial perspective, there are two options for the partner. Each requires the partner to verify both the expense and provide proof of payment for expenses covered by the partner. To help visualize, let's assume the total project cost is \$10,000.

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Option 1: Your organization pays supplier invoices of \$5,000. You submit those invoices along with proof of payment to CCT and then can submit the remaining \$5,000 in invoices directly to CCT for payment. All vendors whose invoices CCT is paying on behalf of the partnership must adhere to the CCT Vendor Policy.

Option 2: Your organization pays \$10,000 in invoices for the project. All invoices, along with proof of payment, are submitted on an agreed upon schedule and CCT reimburses the organization their \$5,000 commitment

Please review **APPENDIX I** to fully understand the payment guidelines and requirements.

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APPENDIX I – CCT PARTNERSHIP PAYMENT GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

In order for Central Counties Tourism to proceed with payment of expenses towards your partnership project smoothly and in a way that satisfies CCT's audit requirements, certain criteria must be met and documentation methods adhered to. This document outlines what you, the Partner, is required to do in order to proceed with the payment portion of your partnership contract. We at Central Counties thank you in advance for your adherence to these guidelines.

1. Prior to any expenses being paid out by CCT under your partnership, you must sign and return your partnership contract and Schedule D. CCT will not proceed with payment until a signed partnership is received.
2. For *Financial Option 1*: The amount of your portion of funds must be paid in full before CCT will begin to pay any invoices on your behalf.
3. For *Financial Option 1*: When you receive invoices that you would like CCT to pay, please forward them immediately by email for payment. Please do not hold and batch invoices before sending. Because CCT considers invoices payable within 30 days of receipt of invoice by CCT, any delay in forwarding invoices for payment may result in delayed payments to your vendors. The number of emails you send to CCT in a day, even if there are multiple emails at a time, is not a problem for us.
4. For *Financial Option 1*: Please notify your vendors that CCT pays by direct deposit, and that they need to provide their banking information or a void cheque along with their invoice. If an invoice is received for us to pay that does not include this information, it will be returned unprocessed, and may be resubmitted when this information has been obtained. Please note that CCT will not hold onto these incomplete invoices until such time as banking information is received. They must be resubmitted in full.
5. For *Financial Options 1 and 2*: All expenses/invoices must be paid for the full amount of either your contribution portion (*Option 1*) or the full partnership value (*Option 2*), stated and signed on in the contract. This document must be submitted in a single file (or as close to it as possible if email transmission limits file size) at the same time. CCT will not begin to contribute its portion of the partnership funds until your respective portion of the financial obligation is fulfilled.
6. For *Financial Options 1 and 2*: Copies of your original invoices/receipts must be submitted with proof of payment. Proof of payment can be in the form of:
 - a credit card or bank statement (with irrelevant, unrelated or sensitive information blacked out) showing:
 - corresponding charge, and
 - account holder name
 - a cancelled cheque
 - a statement or printout from your accounting system showing:
 - vendor invoice entry, and
 - payment entry showing payment details

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7. For *Financial Options 1 and 2*: You as the partner will be the sole business/organization contributing payment and requesting reimbursement. CCT will not reimburse you for expenses paid by employees, volunteers, or other businesses/organizations participating in your event or project. If you are faced with this situation, you as the partner must reimburse the employee/volunteer/participating business first. Once you have done that, your reimbursement will then be considered a reimbursable expense as part of your project and may be submitted along with proof of payment.
8. For *Financial Options 1 and 2*: Please provide a summary spreadsheet, attached as an Excel document, that lists details about your expenses (amount, vendor, etc.), and cross-references it to the corresponding payment document details. CCT does not provide or require a set template to be completed. A simple summary document is acceptable.
9. For *Financial Options 1 and 2*: You have applied, and were approved, for Partnership Funding in the amount that you expect to spend. It is CCT's assumption that, without our contributing funds, you would still have spent your portion of funding on your project. CCT allocates all expenses to your portion of the funding first, before contributing its portion of the funds. In the event that you do not spend the entirety of your funding allotment, CCT will not pay 50% of the lesser total. It will instead contribute the balance of expenses after your full portion has been paid.
10. CCT understands that circumstances can change mid-project and will provide you with an Addendum Request Form should you:
 - a. Need to change your financial option
 - b. Need to change any aspect of your partnership contract including, but not limited to, a project shift or redirection of funds

Once received and approved, the addendum will be added to the partnership contract rather than creating an entire new one.